



Oakland University News Information Update

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Agreement Addresses Multicultural Concerns

Administrators and students have signed a pact outlining steps for improving multicultural programs and policies that affect minority students at Oakland University. President Joseph E. Champagne has approved the plan and reviewed it with the university Board of Trustees.

University administrators and representatives of three student groups have agreed on a number of issues for improving the multicultural environment of Oakland University.

The vice presidents for academic and student affairs, the dean of students and the director of the Office of Equal Opportunity began discussion with representatives of the Association of Black Students, the University Student Congress, and Raices (an Hispanic student group) on March 27 to review issues brought to the administration.

Of the issues put forth by students, the students and the university have agreed on the majority of the items. All parties have agreed to discuss the remaining issues at subsequent meetings during the spring and summer. The following list highlights the major elements of the agreement.

- **Internal admissions** — Starting in fall 1990, the university will develop a variety of student support initiatives, including supplemental instruction in high-risk classes, a review of all internal admission standards and departmentally based orientation and support programs for premajors. Particular attention will be given to the removal of unnecessary requirements. In fall 1990, the university will implement department-level faculty development programs on race relations and to address academic issues related to teaching culturally different students.

- **Minority faculty and staff** — The university reaffirms through this document its commitment to equal employment opportunity. It pledges to work more aggressively to achieve a more representative work force in all employee groups. Special effort will be focused on increasing the small number of Hispanic faculty and staff. Recruitment will be intensified at minority institutions. The university will provide periodic progress reports to the Board of Trustees on this agenda, and has committed to a goal of increasing the number of black and/or Hispanic minority faculty and staff by at least two each year.

By fall 1990, the university will establish a minority advisory committee of faculty, staff and students to work with the equal opportunity office, employee relations and the provost's office on recruiting minority faculty and staff. Student organizations will be consulted for the selection of students for this group. The Office of Equal Opportunity will add minority student organizations to the affirmative action distribution list. By fall 1990, the university will develop a method of tracking Hispanic applicants for faculty and staff positions.

- **Tenure** — With respect to tenure, the discussions resulted in a better understanding of current policies and practices and the issue was dropped from consideration.

- **Divestiture** — With respect to divestment, the students agreed the policies and practices of the university are appropriate.

- **Ethnic harassment** — The university is committed to strong sanctions for violations of its policy on discriminatory conduct, with an emphasis on education and community services where appropriate.

Student organizations will assist the administration in making the community aware of the existing policy on discriminatory conduct and the complaint procedure, and will encourage students to report incidents to appropriate authorities in a timely fashion.

- **Residence hall contract** — By spring 1991, the residence halls staff will develop supplemental material to help explain and clarify contract release

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regulations for the residence halls and to improve consumer understanding. The University will extend the residence hall cancellation date to June 1.

• **Marriott staffing and programs** — Students will work with Marriott (food service contractor) to plan at least one multicultural dinner per term. In addition, the Office of Equal Opportunity will audit the Marriott contract for compliance with equal opportunity provisions and to review hiring practices for students and professional managers at Oakland University. The university will work with Marriott to notify students of openings in the Marriott organization.

• **Meadow Brook Theatre** — By the 1991-92 season, the Meadow Brook Theatre will add at least one play per year of a multicultural nature, with a positive theme. In addition, the theatre will develop outreach and promotion activities to increase minority community participation. The Meadow Brook Theatre will ensure that the artistic director consults with culturally diverse groups when selecting productions.

• **WOUX** — By fall 1990, the university, in cooperation with the Department of Rhetoric, Communication and Journalism, will assist WOUX (student radio station) in developing an effective model for operation, similar to that of the *Oakland Post*, to include training, hiring procedures and program guidelines. Student leaders will advise the WOUX board regarding appropriate program guidelines.

• **Community outreach** — By winter 1991, more attention will be directed at Hispanic and minority concerns through a community-based minority advisory committee including dominant representation from the black and Hispanic minority communities in Pontiac and Detroit. In addition, these efforts will be supplemented through the activities of such offices as University and School Relations and the Adult Career Counseling Center. Student recommendations for inclusion on the advisory committee are welcome.

• **Multicultural representation on Congress** — Before fall 1990, the president of the University Student Congress will recommend that the Congress amend its bylaws to establish a seat on the Congress to be selected by the multicultural student advisory board.

• **Funding for multicultural programs** — By fall 1990, a multicultural program fund of \$8,000 will be developed, administered by CIPO and a multicultural student advisory board.

• **Martin Luther King observance** — By winter 1991, the provost will issue a directive to deans and department chairs regarding the significance of Martin Luther King's birthday observance and asking that no examinations

or major assignment deadlines fall on that day.

By winter 1991, the university will develop a set of guidelines for recognition of the Dr. Martin Luther King birthday observance and will involve the Teaching and Learning Committee in the generation of ideas so that faculty involvement will be more extensive.

• **Individual student concerns** — In addition, a number of individual student concerns were raised about misconduct, financial aid and harassment. The students agree that such cases should be handled through existing channels for resolution of complaints. Student affairs staff will work with student leaders to acquaint them more thoroughly with the appropriate channels for addressing such grievances, including the identification of appropriate external agencies.

• **Graduate study** — The graduate office will continue to send letters to minority juniors and seniors regarding graduate school. Additionally, starting fall 1990, the university will promote the availability of graduate assistantships and scholarships in informative ways including workshops each semester, orientation and the multicultural resource guide. Faculty, especially minority faculty, will be encouraged to participate in these programs and to develop mentoring relationships with students. Minority student organizations will be invited by the graduate school to participate in such programs.

The university will identify resources to fund at least five disadvantaged graduate students for fall 1991 and five more for fall 1992.

• **Cultural diversity course** — In fall 1990, the university will ask the General Education Committee to consider approving HST 292 as a general education course; as well as to identify a course in Latin American history that could serve as a general education course. The academic skills center will provide writing tutors to support these classes.

Starting in fall 1990, the Student Affairs Division will work with the Teaching and Learning Committee of the University Senate to develop a model orientation program which includes significant emphasis on racism and multicultural issues.

• **Recruitment and retention** — Starting in fall 1990, the admissions office will meet with minority faculty, staff and students to review and update the university's recruitment plan. Additional outreach efforts will be made to minority community organizations for recruitment purposes. The admissions office and residence halls will develop a new program for senior high school students to visit the campus and the residence halls. Student organizations will work with admissions to get involved in recruitment and precollege mentoring programs as appropriate.

• **Association of Black Students funding** — While this issue remains unresolved, the vice president for student affairs will monitor the allocation process closely during the period when the SAB guidelines are under revision and will ensure that no disparate actions are taken. The university also will explore additional avenues, which may augment resources available to culturally diverse organizations.

• **Closing statement** — The university recognizes the importance of assuring equitable educational outcomes for black, Hispanic and other minority students. It is committed to continuing to seek the additional financial resources which are required to achieve that goal. The administration is cognizant of the social, economic and political factors which impinge upon it and its students and wishes to achieve a just community. To that end, the commitments in this agreement should be viewed as very important elements of a more comprehensive agenda. In that context, discussions will continue through normal administrative channels during the spring and summer of 1990.

Oakland University has a unique opportunity to demonstrate that ours is a civil community, where individual differences and multicultural attributes are respected. The collaborative leadership exhibited by the Congress, ABS and Raices is a source of pride. The strong belief that excellence and diversity along with collaboration are appropriate tenets to guide all planning for the movement of the institution into the 21st century is reflected in the recently issued university strategic guidelines. It is our passionate hope we will not be deterred from that path.

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